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Protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[1] and Agenda 21,[2] the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[3] the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[4] the Mauritius Declaration[5] and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[6] the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[7] and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[8]

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[5] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

[7] See resolution 55/2.

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

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Reaffirming the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,[9] which provides the overall legal framework for ocean activities, and emphasizing its fundamental character, conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach,

Recalling the Convention on Biological Diversity[10] as an important instrument in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity,

Recalling also biodiversity-related conventions and organizations, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[11] the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat,[12] the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals,[13] the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Recognizing the role of national legislation in the context of the protection of coral reefs and related ecosystems within national jurisdictions,

Recalling its annual resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries, including resolutions 61/105 of 8 December 2006, 64/71 and 64/72 of 4 December 2009, and 65/37 A of 7 December 2010 and 65/37 B of 4 April 2011, as well as resolution 65/159 of 20 December 2010 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind, its resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009, in which it decided to organize the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, its resolution 65/155 of 20 December 2010, entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations", its resolution 65/161 of 20 December 2010 on the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant resolutions,

Noting the Manado Ocean Declaration adopted by the World Ocean Conference on 14 May 2009 and the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity of 1995,[14]

Noting also the work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on marine and coastal biodiversity, in particular on coral reefs and related ecosystems, and in this connection the outcome of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Nagoya, Japan, from 18 to 29 October 2010, including in relation to the updating and revision of the strategic plan for the post-2010 period,[15]

Noting further the request of the Conference of the Parties, at its tenth meeting, to the Executive Secretary of the Convention[16] to prepare, subject to the availability of financial resources, a report on the progress made in the

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[9] Ibid., vol. 1833, No. 31363.
[10] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.
[11] Ibid., vol. 993, No. 14537.
[12] Ibid., vol. 996, No. 14583.
[13] Ibid., vol. 1651, No. 28395.
[14] See A/51/312, annex II, decision II/10.
[15] See UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27.
[16] Ibid., annex, decision X/29, para. 74.

implementation of the specific workplan on coral bleaching adopted by the Conference of the Parties in its decision VII/5,[17]

Noting with concern that coral reef degradation will likely lead to the loss of significant economic and social benefits, in particular for States which are highly vulnerable to coral reef loss and have a low capacity to respond,

Recognizing that millions of the world's inhabitants depend on the health of coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development as they are a primary source of food and income, add to the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of communities and also provide for protection from storms, tsunamis and coastal erosion,

Expressing grave concern about the adverse impact of climate change and ocean acidification on the health and survival of coral reefs and related ecosystems around the world, including through sea-level rise, increase in the severity and incidence of coral bleaching, rising sea surface temperature and higher storm intensity, combined with the synergistic negative effects of waste run-off, overfishing, destructive fishing practices, alien invasive species and coral mining,

Maintaining that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change, and calling upon States to take urgent global action to address climate change in accordance with the principles identified in the Convention, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities,

Acknowledging that, in many countries, indigenous and local communities have a distinctive relationship with marine and coastal environments, including coral reefs and related ecosystems, and in some cases ownership thereof, in accordance with national legislation, and that such peoples have an important role to play in the protection, management and preservation of those reefs and related ecosystems,

Acknowledging also the leadership role in tropical marine ecosystems management provided by the International Coral Reef Initiative, a partnership of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations,

Welcoming regional initiatives that address serious threats to coral reefs which are transboundary in nature and, in this regard, welcoming regional initiatives, including the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security, the Micronesia Challenge, the Caribbean Challenge, the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, the Eastern Tropical Seascape Project, the West Indian Ocean Partnership, the West African Conservation Challenge and the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs in the Americas Region,

Welcoming also the efforts of the agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system in the field of the protection of marine biodiversity and, in particular, coral reefs and related ecosystems,

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[17] See UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21, annex, decision VII/5, annex I, appendix 1.

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development,[18] requested in its resolution 65/150 of 20 December 2010,

Acknowledging the importance of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012,

1. *Urges* States within their national jurisdictions and the competent international organizations within their respective mandates, given the imperative for action, to take practical steps at all levels to protect coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development, including immediate and concerted global, regional and local action to respond to the challenges and to address the adverse impact of climate change, including through mitigation and adaptation, as well as of ocean acidification, on coral reefs and related ecosystems;

2. *Also urges* States to formulate, adopt and implement integrated and comprehensive approaches for the management of coral reefs and related ecosystems under their jurisdiction, encourages regional cooperation in accordance with international law regarding the protection and enhancement of the resilience of coral reefs, and in that respect calls upon development partners to support such efforts in developing countries, including through the provision of financial resources, capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies and know-how on mutually agreed terms, as well as the exchange of relevant scientific, technical, socio-economic and legal information, to enable developing countries to take all necessary action for the protection of their coral reefs and related ecosystems, as appropriate;

3. *Further urges* States to identify relevant measures or tools for the protection of coral reefs within their national jurisdiction as an urgent sustainable development priority to address, inter alia, poverty eradication, food security, sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem conservation and, in this regard, encourages States to implement and integrate them, as appropriate, into broader sustainable development strategies;

4. *Stresses* the need to improve the understanding of the economic, social and environmental benefits of coral reefs and related ecosystems, in order to develop and enhance measures to protect coral reefs, reinforce their resilience and strengthen the ability of coastal communities to adapt to environmental changes and coral reef degradation;

5. *Encourages* Member States and stakeholders to address, as appropriate, the protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development;

6. *Notes* the ongoing preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012.

[18] A/66/298.